



Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation

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Federal Communications Commission
 Office of the Secretary

D'Wana Terry, Chief
 Public Safety & Private Wireless Division
 Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Rm. 4-C321
 Federal Communications Commission
 445 12th Street, S.W.
 Washington DC 20554

RE: Proposal to modify §97.207(g) in the Commission's upcoming multi-subject Part 97 Rule Making Proceeding

Dear Ms. Terry:

The Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT®) is a scientific and educational non-profit corporation chartered in the District of Columbia in 1969. FCC licensed amateur radio operators make up the vast majority of our membership. We design, construct, test, and operate space stations in the amateur-satellite service, often in cooperation with radio amateurs in many other countries. We also make available a variety of publications, computer programs, educational services, and INTERNET services promoting space science education among radio amateurs and students worldwide. (See: <http://www.amsat.org>.)

AMSAT-OSCAR-40, the latest of our spacecraft, was lifted to orbit by an Ariane-5 launcher in November 2000. Radio amateurs from more than a dozen countries cooperated in its design and construction. Similarly, together with ARRL, NASA, and cooperating radio amateurs from other nations, we are maintaining and expanding an amateur space station aboard the International Space Station (ISS) for use by astronauts and cosmonauts who are licensed amateur radio operators, for a variety of experiments, and in space science education. (See: the new 3-D IMAX film, Space Station, to watch part of our station in operation. See also:

<http://www.amsat.org/amsat/ariss/Meetings/WSC/Papers/Edu%20Outreach%20Paper%20WSC02.pdf> and <http://www.amsat.org/amsat/ariss/Meetings/WSC/Papers/Payload Paper WSC02.pdf>.)

In our Comments responding to IB Docket 02-54 regarding mitigation of orbital debris (See: paragraph 24, footnote 16), we noted that §97.207(g) of the Commission's Rules requires the first filing of Information to be submitted to the Commission 27 months before initiating space station transmissions and a second filing five months prior. The NPRM did not address the timing issue, which is the reason for this letter.

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As a practical matter, the 27-month deadline requirement has proven to be an unnecessary burden both for amateurs and the Commission. The reason comes from the fact that amateur-satellite service space stations invariably fly as secondary payloads. Secondary payload launch commitments rarely become available as far as 27 months in advance. Thus, the Commission inevitably receives a request to waive all or part of §97.207(g). Moreover, specific frequency plans may be finalized as little as 30 days in advance of launch.

The ITU Radiocommunications Bureau must be informed of space stations in the amateur-satellite service when these stations operate in bands shared with other services. However, no filing time requirements apply. See Article 25, and particularly Section 25.11, which reads:

25.11 § 7 Space stations in the amateur-satellite service operating in bands shared with other services Administrations authorizing such space stations shall inform the Bureau and shall ensure that sufficient earth command stations are established before launch to guarantee that any harmful interference which might be reported can be terminated by the authorizing administration (see No. S22.1).

Article 9 filing time requirements cannot apply, as they pertain only to frequency assignments, which are not made in the amateur-satellite service.

Clearly, informing administrations of space stations in the amateur-satellite service is desirable in case of harmful interference. And, informing administrations of amateur-satellite activities keeps them abreast of useful work done by amateurs. Therefore, AMSAT encourages FCC to inform the ITU Radiocommunications Bureau of all amateur-satellite service activities and recommends that the Commission continue the practice. To this end, we propose a more practical procedure.

We propose that information to be filed with the Commission should be required within 30 days after obtaining a launch commitment. Additional information may be needed if significant changes occur in spacecraft design or launch parameters between the original filing and launch. As pointed out earlier, this change does not conflict with the ITU Regulations. Unlike other satellite services, the amateur-satellite service does not require coordination with other Administrations.

Though Article 25 says nothing about particular information sent to the Bureau, we suggest using the information similarly to that normally requested in Appendix 4 as a basis.

Our specific proposal, in the form of a modification to §97.207(g) of the F.C.C.Rules, is attached as an Appendix, for the commission's consideration on its own motion in the upcoming multi-subject Part 97 Rule Making Proceeding.

Thank you for considering our request. We are happy to meet with you or your staff to discuss this matter in more detail.

Sincerely,

Dr. Perry I Klein, W3PK
AMSAT Vice-President, Government Liaison

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APPENDIX

Proposed change to Part 97 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations

Replace all of existing §97.207(g) with the following

97.207(g) The license grantee of each space station must file a written pre-space information document with the International Bureau, FCC, Washington, DC 20554, within 30 days after receiving a launch commitment. This document shall give all information relevant to the space station's identification and interference potential of the types described in Appendix 4 to the Radio Regulations. If any material item described in the original information document changes before launch, a replacement written pre-space information document shall be filed with the International Bureau. The replacement filing shall be made no later than 30 days after such changes are made and, in any case, before launch.